

October 11, 1963

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. F. H. C. Crick  
M.R.C. Unit for Molecular Biology  
Hills Road  
Cambridge, England

Dear Francis:

I am writing on behalf of Mort Mandel, who would give his eyeteeth to work with you. If my reaction is a bit tepid, perhaps because he has not been pushing as hard as I would have liked on the job he was "hired" for - the exploration of NMR for differential analysis of phosphate groups in DNA in connection with an exobiological problem, but he certainly has the right to spend the time he has in soaking up general biology. He is enthusiastic, I would say spottily bright, perhaps because his training is so recent in areas I would know anything about. We had a very specific job for which he should have been well suited and (except temperamentally) undoubtedly is; we did not really investigate him from your standpoint and I am still uncertain what to say. (I mean just that, not "no").

If you do get a good reading on his qualifications as a physicist (and his offer of a faculty position at Washington University may be testimony of it) he might play a very worthwhile role in your group, especially if you did want such a physical type among the others. He is not (yet?) very aggressive in his thinking, perhaps rightly, as his factual base in biology or biochemistry started out very thin; he is not the Szilard type of theoretician willing to ask questions from such a base.

If you had some use for NMR - and I suppose you should - this might well tip the balance of your own judgment.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics